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Message from the Mayor

Last week, I testified at the third and final hearing before the DC Council Committee on Education, Libraries and Recreation on the proposal to build a new central library at the site of the former Convention Center.

I want to thank Councilmember Patterson for holding this public hearing to help transform our library system and to build a new central library for the residents of the District of Columbia. Thanks to her leadership, the public has had several opportunities during the legislative process to review and comment on our proposal for a new central library.

I encouraged the Council to take a bold step by creating a new library for District residents to replace the run-down and obsolete Martin Luther King building.

My administration and the DC Public Library system have laid out an exciting vision for the future of our library system. We highlighted the critical need for a world-class library in our city – a library that truly lives up to the legacy and stature of the man it commemorates, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Many of the citizens across this city who attended our most recent Citizen Summit support our vision for transforming the library system. District citizens told us that our libraries must be reinvigorated as community institutions where residents can congregate and learn.

Through the hard work of the members of the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Future of Libraries, the vision of a transformed library system has been refined. The Task Force surveyed the best library systems across this country and determined that the District could and should be among these leading cities when it comes to a modern and vibrant library system.

There is no question that at the heart of this system should be a new central library equipped for the 21st century and accessible to all the residents of the District. And this central library, I firmly believe, should be a part of the redevelopment of the old convention center site as a civic anchor to the retail, housing and commercial opportunities that will grow in this area.

Without question, we are now at a critical moment. To make this vision a reality, Council must act quickly and affirmatively on my legislation to build a new central library at the site of the old convention center.

Let me tell you why we must act now.

- Earlier this year, we committed to invest in our neighborhood libraries, and we followed through with significant funding: \$170 million over the next five years for the branches alone.
- Without my legislation to fund a new central library, we would be merely tinkering with the system. We will lose an opportunity to ensure that the branches are connected and supported.
- We talked about making a powerful statement by preserving public space for the new central library on the site of the old convention center, where new and exciting retail, housing, and commercial opportunities are being planned.
- Without my legislation, we lose an opportunity for a magnificent central library to anchor this site and be accessible to all citizens of the District.

As you know, the District also received support from the President and First Lady of the United States who provided \$30 million in my budget to help with this effort. Congress is reviewing the request. Approval of my library proposal by Council would send a positive signal to Congress about our commitment to build a world-class central library.



AGENCY WEBSITES

Department of Human
Services

Office of Tax and
Revenue

Department of Parks and
Recreation

Department of
Employment Services

Metropolitan Police
Department

Office of Boards and
Commissions

Commission on the Arts
and Humanities

LINKS TO OTHER WEBSITES

Hands on DC

DC Convention and
Tourism

DC Public Library

Mayor's Historic Preservation Awards

Last week, I was pleased to present awards to ten projects and individuals who were winners of the Fourth Annual Mayor's Awards for Excellence in Historic Preservation for their work in neighborhoods across the city including Deanwood, Mt. Vernon Square, Cleveland Park, Logan Circle, the U Street Corridor, Capitol Hill and Dupont Circle.

On October 24 we presented award in the areas of Excellence in Stewardship, Excellence in Community Involvement, Excellence in Public Education, Excellence in Design: New Construction, Excellent in Design: Restoration and Rehabilitation; State Historic Preservation Officer's Award and the Historic Preservation Review Board Chairman's Award for Law and Public Policy.

It's important to recognize the significance of historic preservation to the economic revitalization of our city. Forty percent of all building permits in our city last year were for work in historic districts. Last week's awards recognized the varied roles that individuals, companies and organizations play in preserving our city's history while promoting its potential for economic development. For example, the renovation of the Dunbar Theater building returned a star to the U Street corridor while a lofts project at 14th and P Streets demonstrates how new construction can complement and enhance our historic building stock.

The award ceremony took place at the Stephen Decatur House Museum near Lafayette Square, and it was sponsored by the DC Office of Planning, the DC Preservation League, the Stephen Decatur House Museum and the Washington, DC Economic Partnership.

New Software Helps Adults Learn to Read

The State Education Agency (SEA) at the University of the District of Columbia has been recognized by PLATO Learning, Inc. as "best in the country" for the implementation of PLATO, a comprehensive, web-based, adult literacy software program.

We launched the Adult Literacy Initiative in 2003, and designated the State Education Office to lead the initiative. In 2005, the SEA, along with many public and private stakeholders, embraced a new customer-centered strategy. This management strategy includes extending access to the Internet so that DC residents can use adult literacy products like PLATO. By partnering with Verizon and the DC Department of Parks and Recreation, the SEA was able to continue providing adult literacy services to DC residents while they also work independently on software programs in recreation centers, cyber cafes, at home, or wherever the Internet is accessible. DC residents report that they love learning computer skills and academics at the same time.

The PLATO system also provides immediate recognition and rewards for completing course work and skill mastery. This feature helps to empower learners and boost their self-esteem. In the first nine months of its implementation in the District, more than 2,100 adult learners logged online to PLATO, mastering modules and achieving personal goals, like getting a GED, obtaining a job, or helping their child with school work.

For more information on PLATO, contact the State Education Agency at 202-274-7181.



BRC Alerts

DCLMPC Partnership
Works!

DCOA Spotlight on Aging

DHS Outreach

DISB DC Financial
Gateway Express

OAG Inter Alia...

OAPIA Updates

OPGD Grant Funding
Alerts

Casey Trees Announces DC's Largest Tree

Autumn is the time of year when we all take notice of the beautiful trees that adorn our city and neighborhoods.

Last week, I was presented the Leadership Award for Urban Greening by Casey Trees. The results of a six month search for the District's largest tree was also announced during the ceremony. The ceremony was held at the Tudor Place Historic House and Garden, home to the District's largest pecan tree on a splendid fall day.

A White Oak tree in the 2800 block of Northampton Street in Northwest was designated DC's largest tree. This tree along with others in the city were measured and compared using the National Register of Big Tree System that assigns points for circumference, height and crown spread.

The Northampton White Oak was awarded the status of DC's largest tree because it is 105 feet nine feet taller than the Montrose Tulip poplar, the second place winner. The search for large trees is part of the Living Legacy Campaign launched on Arbor Day by Casey Trees at the Frederick Douglass House to encourage the appreciation and stewardship of large trees throughout DC.

The Northampton White Oak tree has been the site of a neighborhood block party for twenty years. This tree has received international recognition when the US State Department brought visiting Soviet Prime Minister Nikita Khrushchev to visit the tree in 1964.

Hans Johannsen received Casey Trees first Lifetime Achievement Award for more than 30 years of service as the District's chief forester. John Thomas, Chief Forester of the Urban Forestry Administration, and Michelle Pourciau, Director of District Department of Transportation, also received awards for their work.

Casey Trees works to restore, enhance and protect the tree canopy of the nation's capital by collaborating with residents, neighborhood organizations and agencies.

Action Agenda for Students

On November 19, Superintendent Clifford Janey and I and a coalition of education leaders issued an "agenda for action" to double the number of DC public school students who successfully complete college. The Double the Numbers coalition, which includes the DC State Education Office led by DC State Education Officer Deborah A. Gist, the DCPS, the DC Education Compact and the DC College Access Program, began its efforts by releasing a report, *Double the Numbers for College Success: A Call to Action for the District of Columbia*. The study underscores the urgent problem of low graduation and college success rates for DC public school students, and provides an action plan to increase community support to help keep more students on track for success in and beyond high school.

The five-month study of the high school and college attainment of DC students was based on research conducted by The Bridgespan Group, a Boston nonprofit organization that provides management consulting and research services to help bring about social change. The study was commissioned by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. To view the report, go to the Website of the [State Education Office](#).

DCLMPC Awards Program Recognizes Outstanding Partnerships

Last week, I was pleased to recognize the efforts of the members DC Labor-Management Partnership Council (DCLMPC) for their outstanding accomplishments through agency partnerships.

The Office of Labor Management Partnership presents monetary awards ranging from \$500–\$2,500 to the top three partnership projects. These funds can be used to further partnership activities and programs.

There are four awards categories: The Pothole Award in recognition of the project of the year; Advancement Award recognizes partnerships that overcame real challenges and obstacles; Innovation Award for partnerships that use an innovative method beyond normal or traditional approaches to develop or implement a project; and the Most Valuable Partner Award which recognizes an individual partnership member who is invaluable to the partnership.

POTHOLE AWARD

1st place – Department of Housing and Community Development
2nd place – Office of the Chief Financial Officer – Steering Committee
3rd place – Department of Insurance, Securities and Banking

INNOVATION AWARD

Office of the Chief Financial Officer – Steering Committee

MOST VALUABLE PARTNER AWARD

Vanessa Akins and Angela Nottingham – Department of Housing and Community Development



District Activities



Mayor Williams and CFO Gandhi congratulate Julia Friedman upon her retirement from the CFO's office.



On November 2, Mayor Williams received the Casey Trees' First Leadership Award for Urban Greening at the Tudor Place Historic House and Garden.



Mayor Williams, Council Chairman Linda Cropp, DC Arts and Humanities Commission Chairman Dorothy McSweeney and DC Arts and Humanities Commission Director Tony Gittens cut the ribbon officially opening the City Hall Art Collection.

Community News

- [Mayor Supports Funds to Ensure Smooth Mayor, Council Transition](#)
- [City Honors Excellence in Arts: Submit Your Nominations for Mayor's Arts Awards](#)
- [Rental Housing Conversion and Sale Act Task Force Holds Public Hearing](#)

Upcoming Events

[View All News Releases](#)

11/14	Kickoff Celebration for 52nd Annual DC One Fund Campaign 11 am - 1 pm Kennedy Recreation Center 7th and P Streets, NW
11/18	Child Care Information Fair 11 am - 4 pm Turkey Thicket Recreation Center 1100 Michigan Avenue, NE For more information, call 202-727-8149
11/29	Washington, DC SBDC and DC Office of Contracting and Procurement roundtable on procurement 3 pm - 5 pm 441 4th Street, NW, Suite 1107 South For more information, call Evelyn Ross, 202-724-4009
12/5	Metropolitan Police Department 6th Annual Awards Ceremony 7 pm DAR Constitution Hall

